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# STRANGE NEWS

OF A

## Most Dreadful Fire

AT

## BEDMINSTER

IN

## DORSET SHIRE

Which happened on *Saturday June* the 28th. 1684. and burnt to the Ground the Market-House, and an hundred and ten houses more, to the great Terror of the Inhabitants, and the loss of five or six thousand pound.

I should have given the expecting World a more early Account of this dreadful Fire, but that the distance of that place from *London*, would not give me the opportunity of so certain and punctual Intelligence as I desired the faithfulness of this Relation should present the Reader withall, and the matter it self deserves; considering the dreadful Circumstances which commonly attend such sudden Conflagrations, of which we have of late years had several unhappy Instances both in our own Country of *England*, and from remoter parts beyond the Seas, where the inclemency of that Tyrannical Element has usurpt upon the fairest fabricks, and buried the most Noble Structures in Ruin and Desolation.

*Bedminster* was a fair Market-Town in *Dorsetshire*; distant about an hundred and ten miles from *London*, from *Bredport* in the same County four Miles, and from *Crookhorn* in *Somersetshire* five Miles. This Town in the late *Rebellious Wars* was remarkable for the Eminent and unshaken Loyalty of the Inhabitants; who with what opposition, they were able to make, refusing to quarter some part of *Oliver's* Army, the Souldiers most barbarously abused their Wives and Children, rifled and plunder'd their Goods, imprisoned the Inhabitants, set fire to their Houses and layd the greatest part of the Town in Ashes. Such are the common mischiefs of Civil-wars, in which this Town had its full proportion of misery and distress.

On *Saturday*, which was the 28th. of *June* last, between the hours of three and four in the Afternoon the wind blowing high at *North-West*, or by *North*, a fire broke out at a *Kiln* in a Farmers Yard, where they were drying of Malt, by the carelessness of the *Kiln-Keeper*, whose negligencies

said to have been the sole occasion of this dismal Accident; the *Kiln* being thatch'd and the Wind violent, it suddenly got the mastery of it, and fir'd all the adjacent Houses which were all thatch'd and with the late great drought dry'd to tinder, that the flames ran along like Wild-fire, and met with nothing that could withstand their impetuous Violence. The rage of this unmerciful Element at last seized the *Market-House*, which it presently consumed; notwithstanding all their Endeavours to preserve the same to the great discouragement of the trembling spectators, who were all in so great a surprize and consternation, that they had scarce sense enough left to secure themselves from the ravenous Conquest of these devouring Flames. As soon as the *Market-House* was down, it began it's Circle round the Neighbouring Houses, and burnt to the Ground; an hundred and ten Dwelling-Houses, besides Barns, Stables and Out-Houses, and had certainly consumed the whole Town, if by the great mercy of God and indefatigable Industry and Labour of the Inhabitants and their Charitable Friends who came in to their Assistance, it had not been stop'd, which the Wind abating of its former fury was more easily accomplished. Several of the most considerable *Inns* were burnt, with all the goods, shops and houses, of some of the most substantial Trades-men: for so fierce was the Torrent of the enraged Flames, that tho they had day-light before them, they could save very little of their Goods; which had it happened in the dead of Night, had certainly burnt down the whole Town and occasioned the death of several of the poor Inhabitants, who must questionless have suffered in the fire, or been buried in the Ruins; but falling out as it did in the Afternoon, not any were lost in the fire, tho several were much hurt endeavouring to stop its rage, and save what Goods they could from its sudden Fury: It began near the Church, which standing at a little distance from the Houses at the end of the Town, and the Winds carrying the Flames from it, received no damage, which else from the violence of the fire would have suffered in the same miserable and deplorable Calamity. Distress and trouble are said to come like a Whirl-Wind not to be foreseen or prevented, and the same persons who thought themselves happy in the enjoyment of what their Good Husbandry had stored, in three hours saw all lost, and themselves the unhappy Objects of common Charity.

The loss of the whole is computed to amount to five or six thousand pounds, which will be the Ruin of several honest Traders and others, if not releived by some Kind and Christian Benevolence.



L O N D O N.

Printed by Elizabeth Mallet in Blackhorse-Alley, near Fleet-Bridge 1684.